and the like, people say that education is all about opportunity and expanding your horizons. But some part of it is about shrinking people, about teaching them that they are not the measure of everything....We want to give graduates confidence to face the world, but we also want to protect the world a little from their confidence. Humility is good."

The faculty’s vote on May 15—168 in favor, 14 opposed, 11 abstentions—puts in place a new set of course requirements as the successor to the current Core curriculum (see "General Education, Finally Defined," March-April 2007, page 68). The new curriculum aims to connect a student’s "liberal education" with "life beyond college," prescribing a one-semester course in each of eight areas (see page 68).

The faculty intends this work to prepare students for "civic engagement"; to teach them to "understand themselves as products of—and participants in—traditions of art, ideas, and values"; to ready them to "respond critically and constructively to change"; and to develop their "understanding of the ethical dimensions of what they say and do." The ways in which each area of study are expected to achieve these goals are specified in the motion the faculty adopted; the full text, which also covers the rationale for the program and its administrative apparatus, appears at www.harvardmagazine.com/go/gen_ed.

Arriving at this point was not easy. The curriculum review as a whole has taken four years. In that time, students have been presented with new options for study abroad, secondary fields (minors), foreign-language citations, revamped introductory courses in the sciences and humanities, and lessened concentration requirements. They have been given more time to choose their major fields of study, accompanied by much-enhanced academic advising to help them make their decisions (see page 68).

But getting faculty members, who specialize in disciplines, to agree on a successor to the Core was the toughest challenge. During the last, intense meetings over general education, serious debates took place about the role of historical study, foreign languages, and other fields. (Many of these concerns were addressed...